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ABSTRACT

This book describes a program of anger management for teenagers. Chapter 1 describes the OK Line, a strategy based on Rational Emotive Therapy (RET). The important concept in RET is: the way one thinks affects the way one feel, which affects what one does. If one is feeling angry and one's behavior is violent, then it becomes necessary to reprogram the way one thinks. The OK Line is a group activity designed to take place in eight stages using group support and group evaluation. Chapter 2 discusses the concept of anger management. Two main sources of anger, unresolved grief (loss) and learned behavior, are analyzed. Chapter 3 provides information for getting a group started. Chapter 4 contains a set of resources for those who find it difficult to use the OK Line. Included in this chapter are ideas for using an anger chart to recognize the signs of anger, keeping an anger journal, and other anger management techniques. Chapter 5 describes a self-management program and provides information about conflict resolution and constructing a support network, as well as role play exercises to help the student ask for support. Additional resources for conducting groups are included in appendices. (LLL)

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A PROGRAMME FOR ANGER MANAGEMENT WITH TEENAGERS

THIRD EDITION

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FOREWORD TO THE THIRD EDITION

I am delighted that Hazel Findlay, my colleague and mentor has agreed to be my co-author. This is an extensive revision of the second edition and most of the credit for the improvement is hers.

Hazel's experience as a counsellor has been in a girls' college, so that when referring to that experience, she uses the pronoun 'she'. My experience has been in co-educational schools and as most students needing anger management are male, most of my experience has been with boys. This explains the male bias in the programme, but does not deny that girls and young women also need assistance in the safe expression of their anger. Angry males may become violent; angry females are perhaps more likely to suffer from depression and guilt if anger is internalised.

Hazel and I trust our colleagues to use this resource as a starter and to develop their own techniques and programmes from it. In fact our only instruction is not to follow this programme slavishly. It is hoped that counsellors have a basic understanding of the people with whom they work. That insight, together with the appropriate use of this and other resources should enable them to assist their students toward better mental health.

Neil Grant

INTRODUCTION

Traditional anger management courses have attempted to teach alternatives to violence and aggression, which is often the main response of people who become angry. This approach is extremely valuable, but the OK Line goes further. It teaches that anger itself is an unnecessary response to many situations. This book uses a two pronged approach.

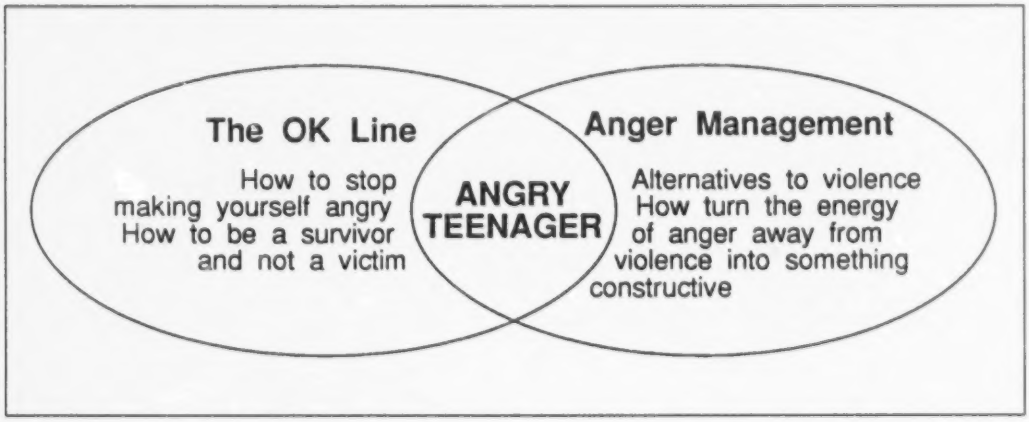
These two approaches can be used separately or together. If both are used however, the OK Line should be used first, for a large number of reasons which will become clear as you use it. You may even find that you will not need to do the Anger Management section or be able to delete large parts of it. In addition the Anger Management part of the programme has been largely rewritten with frequent reference to the OK Line.

So the programme now has two distinct but interwoven parts:

PART A	PART B
RET The OK line A new way of thinking How to stop being angry	Anger Management Ideas and strategies for coping with being angry How to stop being violent

The more successfully we can teach Part A the less need there will be for students to use the strategies of Part B. Since the last edition was printed, this is, in effect, what has happened in my own programme.

Readers who intend to use only strand B (ie., the resources in Chapter 4), should not discount Chapter 5, which is devoted to assisting students towards autonomy.


The OK Line
How to stop making yourself angry
How to be a survivor and not a victim
ANGRY TEENAGER
Anger Management
Alternatives to violence
How turn the energy of anger away from violence into something constructive

CHAPTER 1
Rational Emotive Therapy (RET)

by Neil Grant

This approach, developed by Albert Ellis, explores in depth the link between thinking patterns and the emotions which follow. It states that many unpleasant emotional situations can be alleviated or removed altogether by examination of the thinking pattern (often not deliberately conscious) which precedes the emotion. RET can become a powerful self-management tool for those who use it and practise it. As originally presented RET is pure reason and therefore limited to people who can handle intellectual concepts.

Hazel Findlay, Guidance Counsellor at Marlborough Girls' College has adapted the concepts of RET to a form where it can be used by most people. Properly taught, it provides the recipient with an "Aha!" experience as well as a cognitive one. It "hits them in the gut as well as in the head".

This development has come to be called "the OK Line" by the students who use it (having scant regard for therapists who tend to associate the expression "OK" with Transactional Analysis!) It becomes an important part of this programme which is aimed at third and fourth formers, who are in the midst of such change that changing their thinking pattern just comes as another one. Trying to do the same thing with adults is infinitely more difficult.

The important concept in RET is:

the way you THINK
⇓
affects the way you FEEL which
⇓
affects what you DO.

If you are feeling angry and your behaviour is violent, then it becomes necessary to reprogramme the way you think.

At this point I will hand over to Hazel to tell you about "The OK Line".

THE OK LINE

by Hazel Findlay

While acknowledging that some forms of anger come from a deeper level, it is my experience as a school counsellor that a large proportion of the strongly negative emotions experienced by young people (including anger), is largely self-induced and unnecessary. A collection of statements made to me over the years by students in the counselling situation will make the point.

They/he/she/it can:

- get in your hair
- get up your nose
- get under your skin
- make you steam at the ears
- make you froth at the mouth
- give you a pain in the neck, bum, butt
- drive you nuts/loopy/loony/bananas
- drive you up the wall and round the twist
- hack you off/cut you up/pee you off
- piss you off/stuff you up
- make you come apart at the seams
- make you blow a gasket
- make your blood boil/turn your stomach
- make you want to vomit/spew/spit
- give you the willies, the jitters
- give you the screaming abdabs, the shits
- scare you silly, witless, shitless
- scare the pants off you (if you haven't already got your knickers in a twist!)
- embarrass the hell out of you
- embarrass you out of your mind
- make you weak at the knees
- turn your legs to jelly
- make you want to curl up and die
- make you want to curl up and disappear.

Indeed, they/he/she/it can make you wish the very ground would open and swallow you up!

Put this together with other such self-defeating statements as "It's just too awful", "I just can't stand the very thought", "I couldn't cope with that", "It's too much", and the tendency people have to "group gripe" whenever they get the chance, and you get the message embodied in Ellis's Rational Emotive Therapy. We have, embodied in our very language, the capacity to programme ourselves to magnify our problems way out of proportion. As a consequence, we suffer negative emotions at a much more serious level than we need to. There is a strong link between what we THINK and what we FEEL. And, of course, there is an equally strong link between what we FEELand what we DO.

Growing up is all about taking responsibility for oneself — for one's own feelings, one's own behaviour, one's own performance, decisions and future. One unfortunate consequence of our tendency to 'awfulise' is that it retards this process by allowing us to blame the other person in the problem for the way we feel. I spend much of my time as a counsellor retraining the way people think. This is not done on an ad hoc basis, but as part of a programme delivered at the fourth form level. The central focus of this programme is the strategy which my students have labelled "the OK Line". The programme is designed to help kids take responsibility for themselves and the OK Line is the means by which they achieve it.

The OK Line is a strategy based on Rational Emotive Therapy. During my training as a counsellor I was fortunate in that I was given this theory of counselling to study at an in depth level, with a view to teaching it to my fellow students. My exposure to Ellis' work then was not simply the viewing of Ellis doing a live counselling session with "Gloria". (Who amongst us could forget Gloria?!!) Making that film was probably the worst mistake Ellis ever made. As a result, many trainee counsellors have discounted his work as overly intellectual and confronting.

What the OK Line does is to decognify the whole thing and deliver it at the feeling level, so that it becomes an "Aha!" experience instead of a lecture. The *last* thing an angry /upset /resentful /offended / frustrated person wants is to be given an un-empathic lecture on how screwed up his/her thinking is, no matter how true that may be. The very best of our training at Waikato University was that our trainer designed *experiences* for each of us according to what each one of us most needed and I find that I have modelled my counselling on this. The OK Line is an experience. When your client gets to the "Aha!" bit, the changes in the body language leave you in no doubt. The posture becomes more erect; sometimes there is a rueful shake of the head as they *discover* the reasons for their bad feelings. Often there is the dawning of a smile which widens into a delighted grin. The eyes "clear" in a remarkable fashion as the implications do likewise. Bright students enjoy doing this bit themselves. Less bright students might need some assistance. Whatever their intellectual ability, they are now in a frame of mind to *listen* as you help them throw away the crutch of blaming others and teach them how to "walk" without it. They still have the hard work of learning *how* to change their thinking pattern, but their motivation is so great that they are usually only too willing to do it.

It is necessary to point out that my programme is not about anger management as such. It is a Developmental Groupwork Programme of my own design and the groups are always self selected so that we don't have to spend a lot of time getting the group dynamics right. My input, though important, is minimal. Once it is done, I tap into the tremendous potential that people have to help each other change, once they know how to do it. The success rate is high and I can maximise my time. Neil's programme is very different. He is dealing with groups of people who do not know each other and therefore the problems associated with running his programme are entirely different. The rest of the book is about his programme, not mine. Common to both however, is "the OK Line" which he has asked me to write about...which is not an easy thing to do. It really needs to be done "live" with the development of the theme on the board. It would help if you had a sheet of paper at the ready.

STAGE ONE

As with any other counselling technique, it is necessary to allow the students to explore the situations from their own frame of reference. So I listen while they do that, encouraging and reflecting back, mentally taking note of any "awfulised" statements and negative body language which I may use later. While it is important to let them do this exploration, it is not necessary to take a great deal of time over it. One of the beauties of this technique is that your client will be quite happy to do some further exploration later if it is necessary, even moving on to other, often more serious problems. (see p6)

STAGE TWO

I summarise the first part and check that I've got it right and then tell them that I have a strategy I could teach them which would allow them to feel a lot better and enable them to handle the situation in a more useful way. I give them fair warning that it will involve a lot of hard work on their part and check that they are prepared to do that. Usually they agree

that it's at least worth finding out about. At this stage, they are usually fairly non-committal.

STAGE THREE

I put on for them a much appreciated role play of a stroppy fourth former who is "awfulising" herself into feeling extremely negative about going to her maths lesson, with predictable results. By the time I finish, they are rolling about the beanbags clutching their sides. For some reason, the sight of an adult putting on a performance they are only too familiar with from their peers, seems to be unbearably funny. This is good because it tunes the atmosphere up nicely for what I am about to do next, and predisposes them to participate. They want to know the rest of the story of course, and since it is true and neither the teacher nor the girl object to being named, the students find the story really meaningful. Once I'd taught this girl to see that she had programmed the whole thing to happen and taught her the OK line to help her reprogramme her thinking, her behaviour changed instantly and surprise, surprise, the class had the first decent maths lesson they'd had all year. Before long, the two protagonists had forgotten that they'd once been unable to stand the sight of each other, and were able to work together most fruitfully for the rest of her career at school. She is now in her second year doing a B Comm. If she hadn't changed her behaviour when she did, we'd have 'lost' her, because her 'aggro' over the fact that she hadn't got the maths teacher of her choice had generalised, and she had become a real problem. This incident occurred in the early years of running my programme and it was such a classic that I've used it ever since. When I "perform" for a group, they are able to see:

- that this girl had programmed the whole thing to happen...
- because she had "awfulised" herself into a really negative state.
- That she had programmed **his** responses to **her** behaviour
- which reinforced her "awfulising" because it had come true.
- But that she'd blamed him for it
- thereby ensuring that nothing changed, because she had obscured from herself the fact that **she was causing the whole thing.**

Intrigued now, they want to learn how she changed it.

STAGE FOUR

I draw a horizontal line on the board and explain what a "continuum" is. (This is where it gets messy to write about — please draw such a line on a piece of paper.)

We are to identify clearly what is at either end. We start with the one at the right hand side. I label it "neat" and ask for the current fad word which at the moment seems to be "choice". It doesn't matter what you call it, as long as they know what it means. I now collect from them, the things in their lives which they would classify as "neat". The atmosphere is already pleasantly high and they enjoy this bit. We collect things like:

- sport and other physical activities (which are really the celebration of their young healthy bodies and the use of their senses.)
- creative pleasures (the enjoyment of special talents)
- family, friends (people pleasures)
- small transient delights (eg., the sound of rain on the roof)
- deep satisfactions (e.g., a successful outcome after a lot of hard work)
- present pleasures and future hopes

While we are doing this, indeed throughout the entire procedure, I am watchful for signals that might alert me to trouble. This stuff is dangerous. There are people with seriously depleted "neat" ends, and there are those who can **not** celebrate a healthy young body. It is necessary to be sensitive. Care is required. People can get hurt. This book is not about the relative merits or otherwise of group work as such. Like any other powerful tool, it has to be used with skill and care. I hope that readers will give me credit for doing this work responsibly without my having to write pages to prove it.

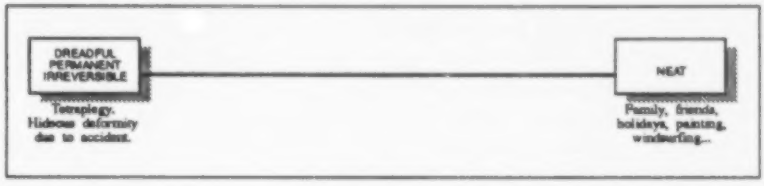
We now talk about the "neat" end. There is much to be learned from it. It is a telling exercise to list just what you've got going for you. It is amazing what one takes for granted! It becomes evident that it is important to build as strong and varied a "neat" end as you possibly can so that it cannot be totally destroyed by one unfortunate incident. Teenagers often render their "neat" end extremely vulnerable by throwing everything else out and replacing it by a member of the opposite sex — and then the "end of the world" occurs when that relationship comes to an end. So we talk about all of that and the fact that it is **your** neat end, and it is **your** responsibility to see what you can build into this end of your OK line, not anyone else's. (Write out your own "neat" end on your piece of paper.)

The atmosphere is now exuberant. This was fun. It is now time to shock.

STAGE FIVE

Now we look at the other end. I warn them that they are not going to like this bit. We are going to look at what the word "dreadful" **really** means. For the purpose of this exercise, I ask them to imagine that I am a wicked witch and that I am about to "zap a hex on them". I point my pen at each one of them to make the point. The atmosphere chills. Each one is required to choose the worst thing that could possibly happen to her — something that would be forever — something that is not reversible — something that would simply ruin her life — for the next forty years.

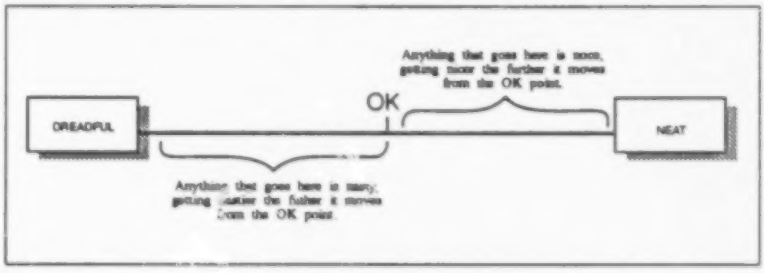
Now here, we are up against a powerful psychological obstacle — the protective layers that we all have to protect us from anxiety. Human beings and teenagers in particular, have this belief system that awful things happen to other people — they do not happen to us! **It is necessary to raise the anxiety level at this point** — to strip away those layers. If you try this, you may be surprised at just how strong those defences are. So I find it necessary to tune the atmosphere right down, fending off their flippant rejoinders until they are actually trying to envisage what it would mean to their daily existence, to be a tetraplegic, for example. Recently, the "Skid Lid Lady" has been going around schools telling the students about her son and his life style as a tetraplegic. On each of her sessions at our school, forty to fifty students had to leave. One lost control of her urinary functions, many fainted — some had to vomit. She told us that boys were often even less able to cope with what she was telling them. She certainly persuaded a lot of people to wear helmets! Nothing else had succeeded — it wasn't "cool" to do so. The "Skid Lid Lady" managed to cut right across that bit of teenage subculture and she has certainly made my OK line a lot easier to teach. Sometimes you have to "care enough to do the hard stuff" and it is really important to do this bit well. **It simply doesn't work if you don't.** So if I don't think they have reached a suitable degree of feeling what "dreadful" really means, I "slay" them with a true life story of a burning I was involved with. And since I can still see it and hear it and smell it and taste it, my own horror is evident as I describe what it is like to see a human face crumble off in pieces as it tries to smile its thanks. That never fails. And while they are still shuddering, I say "Now! Aren't you glad I'm **not** a wicked witch!" They are only too glad to surface to a normal atmosphere and before they lose the feeling (it doesn't take long!), I move quickly on to the next stage. (Before we do, please write on your paper, what affliction would be most awful for you, and spend some time thinking about what it would do to your neat end.) Your line should look something like this...



Now make a mark at the mid point and label it "OK".

STAGE SIX

I put the OK point on the board and remind them about the continuum, so that OK represents things that are neither neat nor dreadful. They are acceptable — they just **are**".



I now select the person in the group who is likely to give me most mileage, name her to draw her attention and throw the pen to her — an action which effectively marks this new stage and breaks with the last one. It is important to do this. I ask her to recall the problem which she'd been so upset about earlier. I make her come to the board and make a mark on the line where the problem belongs — and then I stand back and watch the conflict within her as she heads for the "dreadful" end and stops. She can't put it there. **Nothing** is like having your face burned off! (I can assure you.) She looks at the neat end — shakes her head. Clearly it doesn't belong there! The struggle can go on for a minute or two. It is important not to interrupt. The group is rivetted as they watch. Then we see the "Aha!" experience right before our eyes. Some of the group have already had it perhaps. The atmosphere is unbelievable. It's like watching a birth. Eventually the decision is made and the mark placed on the board — always **between** OK and dreadful.

Other students place their problems on the board. Much completely natural discussion takes place as

they argue about where the problems are relative to each other. Often they completely forget I am there. Eventually a conclusion is reached that each person must decide for herself where her problems lie, but it is useful for her to put her collection of problems relative to each other. Discrimination is now possible. Some of the things they "just couldn't bear" quarter of an hour ago are seen to be so close to OK that they can truly be ignored — they really aren't worth a moment's anger. Others are more difficult to ignore, but can be seen for what they are — someone else's problem which one is at the other end of **for a short while.** Other problems are revealed as things which need to be dealt with. Now we are into the realms of conflict resolution(see p24) and this requires further skills which I promise to teach them in another session after they've got the OK line working for them. [There is no point until they have done that, and that's the truth of it. Have you ever known anyone who is upset/angry/frustrated/resentful to be able to either listen or use good assertive speech patterns? Yet communication skills courses proliferate and thousands of young women now proclaim by their unattractive behaviour that they have attended an assertiveness course — and it failed them. One is apparently supposed to feel more OK once one has been taught how to listen and how to formulate and practise "I" sentences. I simply don't believe that to be true. It is putting the cart before the horse.

However, I find that by teaching people how to get their problems in proportion and how to reprogramme their thinking, the next stage of teaching them conflict resolving skills (which are really just basic communication skills), is infinitely more effective.]

To get back to our group — the "Aha!" experience extends itself as they get to grips with the implications. If they don't bring these up, I do. We look at how giving up the crutch of blaming others actually gives you personal power. By "awfulising", we put ourselves at the mercy of other people and what they might do/say/think. We can choose not to do that. To reinforce all this, I move to the next stage.

STAGE SEVEN

We now make a **truthful description** of all the problems on the board and they are asked to stop me if they find we are writing something untrue about their problem. I write the description up on the board as we go. It usually ends up something like this. All right . . .

- It isn't neat. (Of course it isn't!)
- It isn't even OK. (It wouldn't be a problem if it was.)
- It certainly isn't pleasant.
- It's all kinds of difficult . . awkward . . tough even. (OK. Life is tough, and maybe it's an idea to get used to that fact!)
- It's (quite possibly) unfair. (Quite frequently life is unfair, and that's another fact of life it's better to get used to.)
- It's a pity that for a little while, you are on the other end of someone else having a problem. (This is a frequent occurrence and it's a good idea to have a strategy to deal with it.)
- It's a shame that the other person has that problem. (It is now possible to lead them into the realms of understanding and even forgiveness.)
- It's all very unfortunate.

But that's ALL it is!

- It is NOT dreadful in the true sense of the word.
- It is NOT (usually) permanent
- It is NOT (usually) irreversible
- It doesn't completely ruin your neat end (usually)

"So", I query, "I guess maybe you can cope with it after all?"

The answer is usually an emphatic "yes!!"

Now it is important to understand that I have given you only a specimen session. There is no such thing as a "typical" session. You simply have to be flexible and ready for anything, all skills honed and ready for use. Particularly important are your observation skills. You have to be able to "read" your group and keep track of what is happening to each person in it. For this reason, I research each group before it comes, so that I can be as prepared as possible and as sensitive as possible and ready to change the routine if that is advisable. For instance, I would not adopt my usual "dreadful end" routine if there was somebody in the group who had recently been involved in a fire. A recent death makes things difficult, and of course, the OK line is simply not a suitable strategy to deal with a grief problem anyway. It is however, very good at uncovering all sorts of things that wouldn't otherwise have surfaced because one of the beauties of this strategy is that people are encouraged to explore their problems further.(See p2). Some of these can be extraordinarily painful, but the self selected groups can be amazingly supportive while people work through their pain and I have complete flexibility at MGC which allows me to take whatever time I need to work through anything that comes up. **The OK line is no easy option.** You have to be on top form both physically and emotionally. I think that perhaps in the last edition of this book, Neil did not make that sufficiently clear. This is dangerous stuff and if you are

doing it properly, you should feel like a limp rag at the end of it!

STAGE EIGHT

Now comes the hard bit — putting it all into practice. What we are up against is changing a habit and that's not easy. But it's not as hard for a third/fourth former as it is for you — it is surprising how quickly they can change, using group support and group evaluation. We sit down and thrash out a plan of action for each person and how the group is going to provide support and evaluation, which includes coming back to me if they need to. My support is ongoing, but they rarely have to make use of it. Since this programme is not only about anger management, these plans may involve such things as a desensitisation programme for those afflicted by shyness; or an improved academic performance which has deteriorated due to a self inflicted "chip" or state of boredom; or relaxation training to deal with self induced anxiety which is interfering with performance. Sometimes I end up with several personal sessions doing some sort of skills training. Sometimes it involves arranging one to one time with the remedial teacher. It might even involve organising a group session with a teacher in order to do some conflict resolution. As I said before — anything might happen!

Tips to make it easier for the students to use the OK line.

- Split time into small units. For example, a whole year with a teacher you don't like can seem like forever to a child of that age. But if you split it into period sized blocks it becomes possible.
- Get them to practise pre-programming to "psyche" themselves up to face the day, particularly when they know it is going to bring problems. (See Self Management Programme, p23)
- This should be done on a daily basis, preferably while doing some routine task.
- Another such task should be chosen for an evaluation time at night.(see Self Management Programme, p24)
- They should be warned that there is almost bound to be a period of backsliding, possibly followed by a feeling of failure. I always emphasise that they are welcome to come back when they hit such a spell — that it is normal and almost inevitable and that it is very important not to give in at that point.

CONTRA-INDICATIONS

Like any other tool, the OK line has to be used appropriately. It will not work for

- students who have a deep seated trauma — although it is a good way of discovering those, and getting the specialist help required.
- students whose situation really is dreadful. Most of the people I have utterly failed with have later been discovered to have been living in a sexual abuse situation. When I get this kind of failure now, I refer the child on to a psychologist and such people are now getting help sooner than they would otherwise have done.
- students who are living with a grief situation either new or unresolved. It is a good way of uncovering the latter. (This is in line with Neil's findings about grief.)

It also does not enjoy success with those who prefer to hang onto their crutch of blaming others — and they will be very angry with you for trying to "remove" it from them!

And there are those who use it successfully to help them with their current problems and then forget to use it for the subsequent ones. Such people just need a little revision and eventually they get round to managing it themselves.

And then there are those whose energy is so low that they simply cannot summon up enough to operate the OK line. I've uncovered a few medical problems that way.

Incidentally, before each group leaves, I always apologise to them for what I did to them while we were looking at the "dreadful" end of the line and explain the psychological phenomenon I was operating against. Since it was obviously traumatic for me to recall an experience I would rather forget, there are never any hard feelings and indeed, there is a feeling of respect that I was willing to share it. Anyone teaching the OK line will have to work their own way round what they do for the "dreadful" end.

If you have not already done so, try arranging a few of your own problems on that OK line you should have in front of you . . . you know . . . the kind of problems that have been "driving you nuts" recently. All you need to do is to tell yourself the truth!

Over to Neil now . . . Neil has adapted the OK line for his own use, as you must do if you want to try it. People go wrong

- when they shy away from the tough bit. (If you do that, there will be no "Aha!" experience and you'll be just another adult uttering platitudes.)

- when they get themselves in an unholy mess by not being well enough prepared or not being physically or emotionally up to the demands it will make. (If you open a can of worms, you have a moral obligation to deal with them. If you don't feel up to it — don't do it!)

The reason that I never did write a book about the OK line myself is that I have a few reservations about the dangers of learning it from a book. I would much prefer to actually teach people how to do it. However, Neil pushed me to it. He's pretty good at arranging experiences for people himself! Apart from sections of Chapter 5 on Self Management and Conflict Resolution, the rest of the book is specifically about his Anger Management Programme.

For further information about the OK Line, or about my programme, please feel free to write to:

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BLENHEIM

By now, the reader should be able to see that the OK line has the potential to be a tremendous resource — a strategy which can be taught to many of the people you work with, simply because many of their presenting problems can be dealt with by bringing them into a more truthful perspective. This type of honesty is almost an essential prerequisite for good mental health, and many people are angry simply because they are not thinking truthfully. Such people can learn to eliminate their anger by making the OK line work for them.

However, as Hazel points out on p6 , there are people who simply cannot use the OK line, including those whose angry and violent responses are ingrained as the only possible response. As well as this, it is acknowledged that some counsellors will find it hard to relate to the philosophy on which the OK line is based. For those who find the OK line inappropriate, for whatever reason, the Anger Management programme which follows, might provide a useful alternative.

CHAPTER 2
Anger Management

"Anger is the first emotion human beings experience and the last one we learn to manage effectively. As early as four months of age, the human infant's vague feelings of distress differentiate into recognisable anger. For many of us a lifetime is spent denying, suppressing, displacing or avoiding this troublesome emotional experience".(1) As counsellors our problem can be two-fold, in that we have to deal with our own anger and frustrations, often job related, as well as the anger of those students, staff and parents we see.

Anger management courses, particularly for men, have in the last few years become a major thrust for people working in the field of mental health. Most organisations running such courses have a waiting list, which presumably indicates not only the effectiveness of these courses, but the increasing awareness in individuals of their need for such training.

Although boys and girls have a need for anger management, the two sexes tend to deal with the issue in different ways. "Boys express; girls suppress".

So although much less visible candidates for anger management, girls could well benefit from such a course, provided it focused on the safe expression of feelings and on coping with the emotional states of depression, guilt and frustration which result from the suppression of anger.

Violence is basically a male problem and is the most visible expression of male anger, and this is why most anger management courses are geared towards men.

Murder and rape are the most violent of crimes and "probably 90% of all murders are committed by men".(2) Bungay in his book on murder provides some of the clues for anger management.

"Men, because of their greater physical strength, have historically been the more aggressive, the more violent sex. Men were the hunters, the warriors, the traditional survivors. Men fight, women argue.

Disadvantaged in the verbal battle, many men resort to physical violence, their area of superiority. Their blows reflect the general inability of men to communicate at the emotional level, and the particular frustrations of those who have been left wanting in verbal skills".(3)

Hence working with angry teenagers is one small attempt to produce a next generation of men who are verbally more competent, less at the mercy of their emotions and maybe less likely to beat their wives or children.

This paper is not strictly a programme or a manual on anger management for teenagers but should contain enough ideas, concepts and strategies for most counsellors to use as a base to start from.

However:

> What works for me may not work for you.
>
> What works for senior students may not work for juniors.
>
> What works for men may not apply to teenagers.
>
> What works for girls is often different from what works for boys.

In addition, every course I run differs from the last, not only in terms of my input, content and agenda, but because the individuals making up the group change the dynamics. So see this as a "starter kit" of ideas with some underlying themes. Some of the ideas are mine but many are "borrowed" and I am most grateful to the people listed at the end of this unit for their help and advice so freely given.

THEMES ON ANGER MANAGEMENT FOR TEENAGERS

Given the reasons for male violence, it becomes important therefore, to teach how to communicate verbally on an emotional level.

And it is important to challenge the tradition (or belief system) of men being the dominant sex, with social permission from other men to be violent.

Furthermore, since anger is normally a response to a sense of powerlessness, hence it is important to find ways of giving teenagers back that power and control **over themselves.**

I believe the two main sources of anger are unresolved grief (loss) and learnt behaviour. This has meant that many of the angry teenagers I have seen have needed to re-work their grief, occasionally with dramatic results. The learnt behaviour component comes from the very successful, albeit unconscious teaching by example which occurs in all homes. The message from angry parents, generally fathers, is often reinforced by the male peer group.

I have found the use of imagery as a tool to be very powerful, and *the use of role play essential* (see p28) in bridging the gap between what happens in anger management groups and what happens in real life — in the playground, on the sports field, at home and in social situations. This is particularly true for younger and less able students for whom the more cognitive parts are inappropriate.

Control and awareness comes from knowing what you are thinking and having the skills to change how you think about situations, events and other people.

SELF AWARENESS OR ENERGY FOR CHANGE

Sometimes I have "hooked" boys into a programme by discussing how they see themselves being brought up. These teenagers, who often don't see themselves as being angry, are very aware of the way they are being parented by fathers or stepfathers, and their motivation for joining comes from a desire to be different when they are adult. They don't like what they see, feel or experience as teenagers and have a wish to have a better relationshipwith their children than they have with their fathers.

I have been surprised at the paradox between the ease with which many boys can visualise their possible future role as fathers, and the difficulty they have in seeing themselves as husbands or partners in a relationship.

GRIEF

Although anger can frequently be used as a powerful tool it is often appropriate to look at this as an issue of loss, especially multiple loss. This anger is often indirect and I have seen this in adopted teenagers, especially where the adoptive parents have relationship problems of their own.

Some teenagers, including many of those whose behaviour is called "childish", appear to "mourn" for the security of childhood. Childhood, as seen by teenagers looking back, was a time of great simplicity: they knew where they stood, and saw situations as good or bad, right or wrong, yes or no, black or white. The increasing awareness of adolescence destroys the absolutes and can compound existing confusion, especially confusion over feelings. I have not found this to be an issue for emotionally secure teenagers.

A HYPOTHETICAL CASE

John is a part Maori adopted student who comes from a family where the parents sometimes argue. Issues of loss for John may include:

- Loss of his natural parents
  "Why was I adopted?"
- Loss of identity
  "Am I Maori or Pakeha?"
- If he identifies as Maori then loss, to him, of his language, his culture, his wairua and his lands.
- Loss of his idealised picture of a family (parents fighting), and the loss of family security and love.
- The loss of the innocence and security of childhood.

John's swearing at a teacher (anger) the week after his father finally left home becomes understandable.

Grief can be blocked out, or recycled back through the protest/anger stage in the Kubler-Ross continuum, with the result that students appear "stuck" at this stage, or revert to it very easily. (Elizabeth Kubler-Ross believes that the stages of grief are shock, denial, anger, bargaining, depression, withdrawal and acceptance.)

Some workers in the field of grief believe that too many losses overwhelm our capacity to cope, and the total time needed for grieving increases rather than decreases with subsequent losses.

In a hypothetical case of multiple loss — with losses of the same magnitude, the time needed to cope with:

- Loss 1 could be x months
- Loss 2 could be x +y months, y is greater than x
- Loss 3 could be x + y + z, z is greater then y and so on.

Therefore issues of loss or grief which occur in childhood can still, at times, be part of the anger issue for teenagers and adults, and the mental re-working of the process is sometimes useful.

It is essential that grief is seen as a much wider issue than the death of a family member. For example, some students of poor self esteem can be angry at their inability to cope with school work and can start grieving in **anticipation** of their loss (or lack) of skills which could lead to their unemployability (loss of a job).

Furthermore, loss is a reminder of personal powerlessness. There is nothing which makes children (and adults) feel more powerless than loss, because there is NOTHING we can do to change events. Anger resulting from loss could be, in part, an effort to regain some form of power.

Counselling angry people can involve encouraging them to accept some degree of powerlessness, e.g., "Things I can change, things I can't change and the wisdom to know the difference."

Although there is generally an overall movement from shock to acceptance it is not a linear process. Major emotional stages can be experienced more than once, and others sometimess not at all.

CHAPTER 3
Getting Started

BOYS' GROUPS AND GIRLS' GROUPS

I cannot imagine a situation where mixed groups would work as effectively as single sex groups. I believe that boys' groups should be run by a man (if possible) and girls' groups by a woman. The modelling of an alternative behaviour, by someone of the same sex, is important.

The other main advantage of separate sex groups comes from the fact that male and female belief systems (the B of ABC of feelings, see p16) are so different. This means that often the sexes deal with feelings in different ways, in response to sex stereotyping.

Just as boys get messages like:

- Big boys don't cry
  (don't show your feelings).
- Be a man.
- Grow up.
- Act your age.
- You're a man, you're in charge.
- Stand up for yourself
- Fight him.
- Don't be a wimp
- What are you?

Girls often get messages such as:

- Angry girls are ugly.
- Other people won't like you if you are angry.
- It's unlady-like to raise your voice.
- You're not a pretty sight when you're angry.
- You sound like a fish wife.
- You're being hysterical.
- Go upstairs and stay there until you take the scowl off your face.

Thus the social expectations of many of the peer group is that boys should allow anger to become physical violence and become fighters, scrappers or bullies. Similarly, the pressure on many girls is that anger is turned inwards, sublimated, ignored or denied, and such students may become quiet, withdrawn and depressed, while often feeling guilty.

In addition, many adolescent girls have a great tendency to dramatise or awfulise. They spend a lot of time talking endlessly in groups or on the phone, and reinforce each other's awfulising. When they have managed to make themselves, and each other angry/frustrated/resentful, they tend to resort to vicious verbal abuse, and they are very good at it! Alternatively they may sulk, bang doors, take it out on others (kick the cat syndrome) or they may end up relieving the tension by crying, which often makes them more angry because they have lost face.

The beauty of the OK Line is that it is extremely flexible and can be used for all sorts of groups or individuals, although care must be taken to use it appropriately.

THE SESSIONS

Even assuming there is high motivation to do such a course, it takes considerable time and practice for students with severe anger problems to learn to overcome the learnt behaviour of, perhaps, fifteen years.

I have found that, to have any lasting benefit, two one-hour sessions per week, for ten to twelve weeks, are required.

Some workers in this area believe that it can be very useful to run the first two or three sessions end to end. This tends to overcome the uncomfortable feelings which teenagers are likely to have about being in a group. The introductory parts and the group exercises decrease the likelihood of students dropping out of the programme.

Physical space is important and I limit my groups to about six. I have found it essential to have a whiteboard on the wall, for brainstorming sessions, diagrams, and going with imagery.

At the end of each session I try to set aside about five minutes for:

(a) Affirmation of others—each of the group is to make at least one positive comment about another group member. This can be an appreciation of something they have said or done, or it could be a compliment.

(b) Practising of "I" statements, e.g., "I feel....", "I want..."

These assertive skills assist the group process by:

- Showing an alternative way of dealing with other people.

- Helping to raise self esteem.
- Giving ideas of how others perceive us.

After the introductory session(s) which should cover group guidelines, exercises, the Anger Chart (p13) and Anger Journal (p14), each one hour session covers:

- Discussion of journal (twenty minutes).
- Some theory, role play or brainstorming (25 minutes).
- Concluding exercises (five to ten minutes).

It is essential that most of the session includes student input, otherwise boredom occurs. This is especially true of the last period in the day. Unless the students in the group know each other well, and know you as a counsellor, some time spent at the beginning of the first session on one or two warm up exercises is time well spent. This helps overcome the feelings of unease which students may have, helps to build a group identity and improves listening skills.

Example: Have available an object such as a ball or teddy bear. The leader says "My name is_ _ _ _ _ _and I like (or dislike)_ _ _ _ _ _(name two items, e.g., foods or TV programmes)". Throw the object to another member of the group. She/He has to repeat your name and two items, say his/her name and two items in the same way and then throw the object on. Each person repeats the previous person's, theirs and so on. This can go on for more than one cycle with students' items changing each time they get the ball.

CHAPTER 4

A Set of Resources for those who find it difficult to use the OK Line.

RECOGNISING THE SIGNS — THE ANGER CHART

This is a crucial step and one which should be taken as early in any programme as possible. I have found that it is one of the few steps which is more efficiently done on an individual basis with the counsellor rather than in the group. Few teenagers can satisfactorily do it for homework.

The student, with help, fills in an anger chart, using the instructions at the bottom. Students are very likely to have some memories of what it was like to become angry and how their thinking, feelings and behaviour changed during those times.

- The 1 level is the level of very mild annoyance and levels 9 - 10 are the levels in which they lose control and become physically violent, or panic.
- I always put in an OK level at the beginning as many students are unaware, at least to the extent required, of the state of feeling calm and what that means to them.
- The 1-10 scale on the left hand side can be filled in after the chart is finished because some students initially appear unable to spread their response across the whole range. Consequently the scale may need to be compressed or extended.

USING THE ANGER CHART

- One can immediately "tune into" the state of students on arrival and if the students are anything other than OK, work out what they are going to do about their current position.
- This quickly teaches that anger is not an all or nothing response.
- It allows a student the chance of dealing with his anger satisfactorily.
- It allows students to recognise how close they are to losing control or to recognise how much control they have left.
- It is the start of students owning their own problems.
- One comes across students who seem permanently at stage three or four—the "chip on the shoulder" character. Further separate work on the issue of loss may be called for. The main work from the Anger Chart comes from looking closely at what happens at stages one to four, because at these stages:-

(a) Students need to recognise their own warning signs; the earlier the better.

(b) This is where self-management takes place. The higher up the scale they go, the less likely self-imposed or externally imposed interventions are to be effective.

(c) It makes the connection between what they THINK and what they DO.

An alternative or supplementary approach is to brainstorm a hypothetical Anger Chart on the board (page 13). Have students start to fill theirs in from memory for approximately ten minutes. Follow this with the "I'm Angry" exercise (p14) which will provide more information for their Anger Chart.

In column 1 put down the types of thoughts which students have—"I'll get him", "this isn't fair", "you bastard", etc.

In Column 2 put the changes they become aware of as they become angry, e.g., tension in stomach, tightness in forehead, sweaty palms, clenched fists, tight across shoulders, etc.

In column 3 list the changes in the words they used and the volume used. Also list the changes in what students do, e.g., become quiet, move around faster than normal, avoid looking at people, stare, punch, etc.

This is another use of the THINK — FEEL — DO concept

turn to page 14

MY ANGER CHART — A Specimen Example

	1. **Thoughts** *What I think*	2. **Body signs** *What my body is telling me*	3. **Behaviour changes** *What I say/ What I do*
OK	things are fine	I feel relaxed	sensible behaviour
1	"he pisses me off"	nostrils flare, mouth turns down	turn my back on him
2	"he REALLY pisses me off"	same: only more so	turn my back on him
3	"oh boy! your're making me angry"	tension in stomach	feel like I'm breathing steam out my nostrils
4	"OK! You've asked for it!"	legs start to shake	start muttering and looking daggers
5	"I'll get you, you prick!"	band round forehead	swear at the person
6	"You bastard! I'd like to give you a hiding"	heart starts to beat really fast: pulse in temples	Verbal abuse: start shoving the other person
7	"You motherf. . . . . ! I'll knock your teeth down your throat"	heart pounding; stiff up the back of the neck: lose touch with other signals	get into a fight
8	"KILL!!!"	red haze: singing ears	attack the person with great violence

In column 1 put down the types of thoughts which students have — "I'll get him", "this isn't fair", "you bastard", etc.

In column 2 put the changes they become aware of as they become angry, e.g., tension in stomach, tightness in forehead, sweaty palms, clenched fists, tight across shoulders, etc.

In column 3 list the changes in the words they used and the volume used. Also list the changes in what students do, e.g., become quiet, move around faster than normal, stop looking at people, stare, punch, etc.

This is another use of the THINK — FEEL — DO concept.

A blank chart for photocopying purposes is to be found under Appendicies.

MY ANGER CHART

	1. **Thoughts** *What I think*	2. **Body signs** *What my body is telling me*	3. **Behaviour changes** *What I say/* *What I do*
OK			

In column 1 put down the types of thoughts which students have — "I'll get him", "this isn't fair", "you bastard", etc.

In column 2 put the changes they become aware of as they become angry, e.g., tension in stomach, tightness in forehead, sweaty palms, clenched fists, tight across shoulders, etc.

In column 3 list the changes in the words they used and the volume used. Also list the changes in what students do, e.g., become quiet, move around faster than normal, stop looking at people, stare, punch, etc.

This is another use of the THINK — FEEL — DO concept.

ANGER JOURNAL

DATE			
INTENSITY LEVEL: 1 – 10			
SITUATION			
THOUGHTS			
PHYSICAL SIGNS IN ME			
BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS I Said... I did...			
DID YOU TAKE A TIME OUT	Yes ❒ No ❒	Yes ❒ No ❒	Yes ❒ No ❒
IF NOT, WHAT DID YOU DO?			

I'M ANGRY EXERCISE

Have students face each other in pairs and have one person begin quietly saying to his/her partner, "I'm feeling angry with you". Ask students to increase intensity and volume until they are really shouting. Then the other partner repeats the exercise.

Use this exercise to add to the Anger Chart physical signs, behaviours and thoughts. Other items may include the use of "I" statements at low levels and "You" statements at higher levels — physical distance, etc.

THE ANGER JOURNAL

I have found it useful to issue to students a folder containing an Anger Chart and about eight Anger Journal sheets with some blank pages for later use.

It is part of their commitment to the group and to themselves that they fill in at least one column between sessions.

They are asked to fill this in as soon as possible, certainly by the next day after every time they become angry. No judgement of incidents missed should be made, but looking for the possible reasons for their not completing the anger chart could be useful. The situation is the setting in which they became angry and the thoughts, physical signs and behaviour signs are the same as for the anger chart. However, after about week three, especially if time looks like becoming an issue, I have reverted to doing this exercise every second session, i.e., once a week.

As one who has been through an anger management course I feel that this exercise, the most personally based one of all, is where much of the learning and increase in self-awareness comes from.

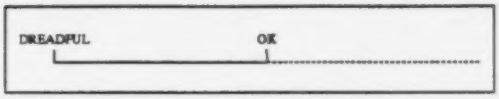
Each session starts with each member sharing one of their experiences. This includes the group leader. This will take up about half of each session and it is vital not to miss it out.

Questions such as:

> How could you have behaved differently?
>
> What other choices did you have?
>
> Were you in control?

are pertinent during these sessions. As the programme develops the range of answers to the first two questions may be expected to increase.

In terms of the OK Line, the Anger Chart and the Anger Journal concentrate on that part of the line between OK and dreadful.



The THINK — FEEL — DO concept at this stage concentrates on physical feelings. This doesn't matter because:

(a) Students often find it easier to describe the physical states than the emotional states in the early stage of group work.

(b) Emotions and feelings are looked at in detail soon.

WHY?

Start with a group discussion, with no judgement, on what is happening in the lives of the students in terms of their behaviour.

Then brainstorm on the board, which has been divided into four, the advantages and disadvantages, short term and long term, of current violent behaviour of the students.

Anything which appears on the disadvantage side creates both space and permission for the group to continue.

It is most useful to keep a record of this session, and to repeat this exercise half way through the programme. All groups can by then add things to their previous lists, especially on the disadvantage side.

ANGER AND VIOLENCE

On the board (use only half) brainstorm all the words which describe anger and violence — accept all offerings.

Then, using the other half of the board, separate that collection of words or phrases into two columns ANGER and VIOLENCE.

Try then to tease out that the ANGER column describes a feeling or emotion and the VIOLENCE column describes a behaviour.

The violent behaviours can then be seen as:

- Physical — slapping, punching, scratching, etc.
- Verbal — swearing, yelling, criticising, frequent name calling, etc.
- Intimidation — using looks, actions,

MESSAGE: ANGER AND VIOLENCE ARE NOT THE SAME THING

ANGER SCRIPT

Much of children's behaviour is an "echo" of the behaviour of those around them. This exercise will illustrate this to the children. I ask these questions of all group members in turn:

How did your father act when he was angry? (How did you know he was angry? Include stepfather, older brother(s)).

What did you learn at home about how men are angry?

How did your mother behave (act) when she was angry? (a nothing response is significant).

What did you learn at home about how women are angry?

How did your mother and father handle conflict?

What did you learn at home about how grown ups handle conflict?

Was anybody afraid at home?

How did you express anger as a child?

What behaviours have you identified from answering those questions, that you would like to change?

PERSONAL POWER AND CONTROL

Most teenagers feel they do not have enough personal power. By personal power I mean power over self, NOT power over others.

Question; "If I could change the way you are feeling, who is more powerful, you or I?" Repeat in various ways.

Define power as the ability to make someone (ourselves or other people) do something or feel something different.

For example:

When Mum says "Your room is a pig sty", and you get mad, who has the power? (Mum because you've allowed her to change your feelings.)

When the teacher says "This isn't good enough, do it again" and you get angry, who has the power? So if you allow Mum or the teacher to take the power you become powerless.

MESSAGES FOR THIS SESSION:

1. **PERSONAL POWER IS LOST WHEN WE BECOME ANGRY.**
2. **OTHER PEOPLE DON'T MAKE US ANGRY. WE MAKE OURSELVES ANGRY OR WE LET OURSELVES GET ANGRY.**
3. **TO REGAIN THAT PERSONAL POWER WE CAN DECIDE TO STOP ALLOWING OTHERS TO CHANGE OUR MOOD.**
4. **WE CAN DECIDE THAT WE ARE IN CHARGE OF OUR FEELINGS.**

This exercise is referred to again and again during the programme, especially if students give others the responsibility for their feelings, e.g. "He made me mad", "She pisses me off", etc. From this point on, I always challenge such statements.

WHO HAS CONTROL?

When a fight is about to start, is it easier to stay and fight, or to walk away? (Stay, mainly because of peer pressure).

So if you stay who has control over you? (They do.)

If you walk away, who has control? (You do.)

Have you got the courage to take your personal power back (from the group you gave it to, including your so called friends)?

When are you going to stand up for yourself and take your personal power back?

THE MENTAL COMPUTER

From the time we are born our brain is being programmed by our experiences. Most of our experiences (some would say all) and the feelings they produced are stored in our brain, which we can think of as our "computer".

It is useful at this point to do some role plays to show how we feel about and react to a variety of situations.

- How we react to being introduced to someone.

(How did it feel? Where did those feelings come from?)

- How we react to a compliment or to praise.

(How did it feel? Where did those feelings come from?)

- How we first felt being in a group, how we feel now.

(How did it feel? Where did those feelings come from?)

- etc.

This should surface the idea that the feelings we have in different situations come from the way our "computer" has been programmed.

Now, when we let ourselves get angry, it is because we are programmed to feel anger. To take responsibility for our feelings, and behaviour we have to learn how to "re-programme our computer."

THE ABC OF FEELINGS (RET.)

This session shows how the "computer" affects our feelings and how, by "re-programming it", we can choose what we feel. This also provides the mechanism to cope with the issue of personal power and control.

We are all familiar with incidents causing pain e.g., hitting our thumb instead of the nail with a hammer, dropping something on our foot, grazes from falling over, jamming a finger in a door or window, being burnt etc.

Therefore we connect the pain with the incident.

PHYSICAL PAIN

The physiology of pain is complex, but we could generalise and say that physical pain is **automatic, not involving the thinking part** of the brain (at least initially). We learn then, as children, to attribute physical pain to the incidents which caused it.

A = incident
⇩ (information bypasses the "computer".)
C = physical pain

The pain is an unpleasant feeling triggered by something **outside of us.**

This is true for PHYSICAL pain e.g., graze, burn, bruise, blow, etc. and is a situation familiar to all of us.

However, there is another sort of pain — EMOTIONAL pain — feelings of embarrassment, hurt, loneliness, anger, frustration, fear, jealousy or rejection. This type of pain is different because it does involve the "computer".

EMOTIONAL PAIN

A = Incident
⇩ ⇩
B = Computer
⇩ ⇩
C = Generalised emotional pain

The B stage (the "computer") is nothing more nor less than your own belief system, your habitual thinking pattern at work.

The trouble is that the move from stage A (incident) to C (pain) can take only a fraction of a second. It can often happen so fast that many people don't even realise stage B exists.

In addition, because we are so used to connecting PHYSICAL pain with something outside of us, we tend to do the same with emotional pain, connecting it with the people involved in the episode, or the episode itself. We tend therefore, **to blame others** and life itself, for our emotional pain, never realising that what we choose to THINK about it (stage B) has a marked effect on the way we feel. While we continue to do this, we are trapped in a self perpetuating cycle where we feel powerless, our emotional state at the caprice of who we should happen to be with and what they might happen to do/say/think. Blaming conveniently obscures from us the fact that the way we feel is largely our own personal responsibility.

For example:

If A = the incident
B = what I am thinking
C = what I feel as a result

the following four possibilities could occur if A= your being late for an appointment with me.

A	B	C
1. Your coming late →	"Maybe I didn't → give him clear instructions?"	worry
2. Your coming late →	"Maybe he's had → an accident"	anxiety/concern
3. Your coming late →	"I bet he's → forgotten"	annoyance
4. Your coming late →	"He's NEVER on → time! He couldn't care less about keeping me hanging around here!"	anger/ frustration

So what I THINK about your coming late dictates how I feel.

To put the emphasis a different way, what I think, dictates how I feel.

Other people don't "get you mad". **You get yourself** mad.

MESSAGE: WHAT YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT.

HOW DO WE MAKE THIS IDEA WORK?

- we need to slow the process down
- we need to examine our present programming to see what contributes to it
- we need to become aware of the effect of blaming others

Let us take these in turn.

SLOWING THE PROCESS DOWN

When we learn to think about incidents, instead of just reacting to them, we are able to arrive at a truthful description of the incident, which allows us to feel an **appropriate** level of emotion. Many of the resources in this chapter are designed to train those students who find it hard not to react. They give such a person that critically important time spent at the "B" of the ABC of feelings.

MESSAGE: BY SLOWING THINGS DOWN, YOU GIVE YOURSELF TIME TO THINK TRUTHFULLY

WHAT FACTORS CONTRIBUTE TO OUR PROGRAMMING?

Clearly, as we learned above, the way we choose to think has a great deal to do with it.

However our personal thinking habits can be influenced by external factors. e.g.,

1. Social morés and stereotyping and the role models we copy are responsible for a great deal of our programming.
2. "Group griping" and the misplaced sympathy of "helpers", can reinforce our own negative programming (an ever present hazard of sharing your problems with your "mates").

Anyone who is really serious about reprogramming, needs to be aware of these factors and how destructive they can be. Some of the resources in this chapter are designed to do this.

MESSAGE: WHAT YOU FEEL DEPENDS ON HOW YOU PROGRAMME YOUR COMPUTER YOURSELF, BUT OTHER PEOPLE AND SOCIETY MIGHT BE PROGRAMMING YOU WITHOUT YOUR EVEN KNOWING IT.

BLAMING OTHERS

As explained on p16, blaming is a cop out, which effectively prevents us from looking at how we could improve the situation. As long as we expect other people to do the changing, then we will be at the mercy of whomever we happen to meet and what their mood might be. Blaming is a crutch and all we can do with a crutch is to limp.

MESSAGE: BLAMING DISEMPOWERS YOU.

TO SUMMARISE THE ABC OF FEELINGS

To take back responsibility for your feelings and to regain control and personal power, you need to consciously reprogramme your computer.

QUESTIONS I OFTEN ASK

Where you in control of your thinking? (No)

Where you a victim of your own thoughts? (Yes)

Had you given away your power to others? (Yes)

Did you blame them? (Yes)

Are you going to change that? (Yes)

Are you going to take control over your own thinking? (Yes)

ANGER MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

By now students will have learnt that when they get aggressive and angry they allow others to control them or set them up. Students are more powerful when they are in control of their responses to others, despite the attempts of others to provoke them.

The following techniques can be used to handle situations and retain personal power. They can also arrest the slide towards the dreadful end of the OK Line.

1) Breathing

Take a few slow deep breaths—this helps to relieve the physical signs of tension or anger. Basketball players do this before important foulshots.

It also provides a short time to work out what you are thinking.

2) Backward Counting

Count silently at an even pace backwards from 20 to 1. It helps to turn away from the provoking person or situation.

3) Mental Images

Think of a time when you really felt great. Students come up with the memory of scoring a basket at basketball or a try at rugby. I try to keep them with that feeling by asking them to describe it in detail, then I ask them to close their eyes and focus on that memory. Most will be able to describe the feelings and thoughts which go with being beyond OK on their line, in fact somewhere towards the neat end.

They may choose a peaceful scene which could have a calming effect such as lying on the beach—warm sun, slight breeze, etc. Ask them to hold on to this mental image for as long as they can hold their breath, or for a few seconds. This works well sitting in a classroom or behind a desk.

4) Use your OK Line

You have already established the "neat" end of your line.

Flick back to what dreadful really means.

Now place this situation or problem where it truly belongs, which will be somewhere between OK and dreadful and describe it truthfully to yourself.

5) Buying time

By now students should be becoming aware of their feelings, both physical and emotional, through the Anger Chart, and the ABC of feelings. This allows them to recognise their danger signals and to put a big STOP sign in their heads.

- They are starting to tune into their feelings, and the sooner the better.
- They are starting to learn the connection between what they are telling themselves and what they are feeling.
- They are starting to take responsibility for the way they feel (if we have taught them well).

The following sorts of phrases could be part of their new "computer programme" and, having bought time in any of the previous ways covered, they can use the time to stay in control.

For example:

> What am I doing? I don't need to feel bad like this.
>
> I am angry. Why am I angry? I've got a choice about how I feel!!
>
> I can choose how I feel about this.
>
> This is all kinds of unpleasant/difficult/awkward/tough/it's a pity/it's a shame. Maybe it's unfair. It is unfortunate. But that's all it is.

OR

> This is only unfortunate.
>
> This is a pity, but that's all it is.
>
> This is pretty bloody nasty — but it's his problem, I've only got the other end of it for a little while. I can cope with that.
>
> This could be sticky, but its only for half an hour.
>
> I don't need to feel bad about this — it's not like being paralysed, it's not forever, and it doesn't affect the 'neat' end of my OK Line.
>
> What a pity she's in a shitty.

6) Time Out

There will be times while you are still learning your new programme when you forget to use your strategies and let yourself get angry. Use time out to reprogramme yourself.

Time out is physically removing yourself from the situation when you feel you are becoming angry and/or your body is becoming tense and/or you begin to feel frustrated and/or you feel you are losing control.

This gives mental, emotional and physical distance between yourself and the situation and gives time to cool off.

- When you take time out you are using your power.
- When you take time out you are remaining in control.
- When you take time out you are demonstrating your courage.
- When you take time out, USE it to reprogramme yourself to the new way of thinking.

It is most important that during the time out you do something physical — walk, run, ride a bike, etc., to discharge some of the tension in your body.

This discharge of tension is one of the reasons why boys find it very hard to walk away from a fight.

Tremendous peer pressure and what other boys think are even more important.

This programme not only teaches new beliefs, it teaches ways of avoiding becoming angry. It also teaches that when you become angry you lose and become weak.

The B of ABC of feelings involves the male belief system and it takes a great deal of courage to go against male conditioning.

Time out will prevent anger becoming violence or aggression, but once your new programme has taken over you won't need to use it so frequently.

THE RAILROAD

On the board draw a line representing a railroad with a station at either end. Imagine a train leaving the station and gathering speed. At the beginning, at slow speed, it is easier to stop the train (the anger train), but the faster it goes the harder it is to stop.

Ask a group member to give an example of their last angry or violent episode. Try to tie in as many of the physical signs, behaviours and thoughts as possible.

Ask the group, in pairs, to give their own examples. (Provide group members with a sheet of paper with a line across it, the ends labelled station 1 and station 2.)

Counsellors are part of the group so one of their incidents can be used as a starter before working in pairs.

This piece of imagery is very adaptable.

- Station 1 could be called gentle or friendly feelings and Station 2 could be called total fury feelings.
- Have you the sort of train with many wagons (carriages) that is slow to start but takes longer to stop?
- The railway journey could be uphill—making the journey longer.
- It could be downhill—train goes fast—a dangerous trip.
- It could be level—or a mixture of all three.
- The railway line could finish just past Station 2 and fast trains run out of track and go off the rails.
- How did you slow your train down? Did you use a technique you have recently learnt?
- How well do your brakes work? Can you stop yourself sliding down your OK line towards dreadful?
- How easily can you find reverse? Can you use your new programme?
- How did you make your train go backwards? Did you remember to tell yourself the truth?
- Time out could be likened to a branch line which loops back to station 1.
- Some students may be able to liken their train to the inter-island ferry. Unless you are watching the shore (the people around you) you can be unaware for some time that you are moving. These sorts of people can be at stage 3 or 4 on the Anger Chart before becoming aware that they are angry.

MESSAGE:

(A)IT IS NECESSARY TO BECOME AWARE OF SELF-SIGNS WHICH INDICATE YOU ARE GETTING ANGRY.

(B)THE SOONER YOU TUNE IN TO YOURSELF, THE EASIER IT IS TO STAY IN CONTROL (USING THE BRAKES).

(C)THE FASTER YOU ARE GOING, THE HARDER IT IS TO STOP.

Question:

Are YOU in control of your train or is it in control of you?

THE TOUCHING GAME

Split the group into two. One half of the group become "touchers" and the other half the "touchees". The "touchers" are allowed to touch the "touchees" but not vice versa.

Interact for a few minutes.

Swap roles and interact for a few minutes.

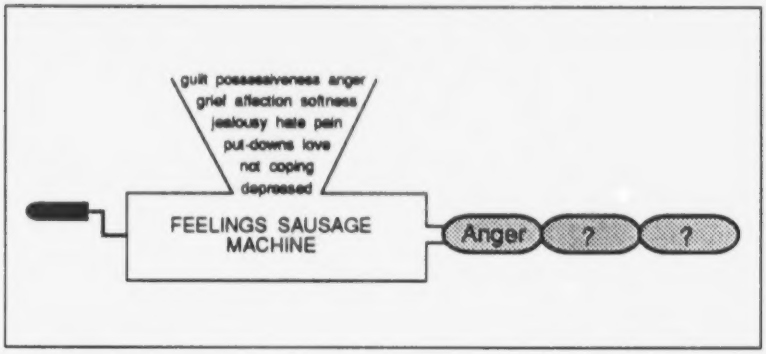
Discuss:

What did it feel like to be a "touchee"?

What did it feel like to be a "toucher"?

The exercise will bring up some strong feelings of powerlessness, issues around the concept of control and the issue of touch and should be used with caution.

THE FEELINGS SAUSAGE MACHINE



Many men never learn the skills of expressing most of their emotions because it is blocked by the socialising process. This inhibition of expression occurs largely because of our concept of maleness.

For this programme to be successful, practice in this area is vital, hence the importance of spending some time at the end of sessions affirming others and giving compliments. However, this session can lead on to further role play.

N.B. Although written for boys' groups this section could equally be adapted to work for girls' groups. In some places "maleness" can be replaced by "adult behaviour" and in other places only a difference of emphasis is necessary. It could be that a complete reworking of this idea is necessary to make it appropriate for your group.

CONTENT

(a) Brainstorm on the board, a list of feelings; the more the better.

(b) Draw around it a funnel:

(c) What feelings can boys and men normally safely express?

The list which comes out of the sausage machine will be small:

- anger, but often as violence
- excitement (sometimes)
- success (sometimes)
- ?

So boys and men have a problem — lots of feelings and no way of dealing with them. What stops us?

Our belief system (the B of the ABC of the feelings).

Our idea of maleness.

(d) Then explain that if we are going to get personal power from our feelings we need to do three things:

- Recognise the feeling or feelings we have.
- Own that feeling (I feel....).
- Express it to someone else — hence need for support. Share it with someone else

MESSAGE: MOST MALES FIND IT DIFFICULT TO EXPRESS FEELINGS OF:

- **ANGER (SAFELY)**
- **LONELINESS**
- **FRIENDLINESS**
- **PLEASURE**
- **GRIEF — "BIG BOYS DON'T CRY"**
- **PAIN**
- **SADNESS**
- **HAPPINESS**
- **AFFECTION (TO OTHER MALES, AS WELL AS FEMALES)**
- **JEALOUSY**
- ***ETC.***

THE MEDIA

CONTENT

This session focuses on how difficult it is for people to be non-violent and how many pressures from outside have to be faced after the group is finished. It also clarifies the double standard in society which says that some violence is acceptable and some is not.

Acceptable violence includes armed forces, war, police, sport, etc.

Unacceptable violence includes assault, rape, dangerous driving, etc.

Not only does this confusion exist, but violent language is to be heard on TV, radio and seen in print, e.g.

"Battle for fertiliser dollar"

"Canberra crusade warms up"

"Battle lines drawn"

"Tourists hit by purse snatchers"

(a) Brainstorm on the board examples of violence on TV (radio, movies) and follow with group discussion. I have found it is

important, but difficult, to keep my input to asking questions, e.g.,

- Where do they draw the line?
- If you were in that situation, where would you draw the line?
- If you need emotional support would this hero be the sort of person you would go to?

and so on.

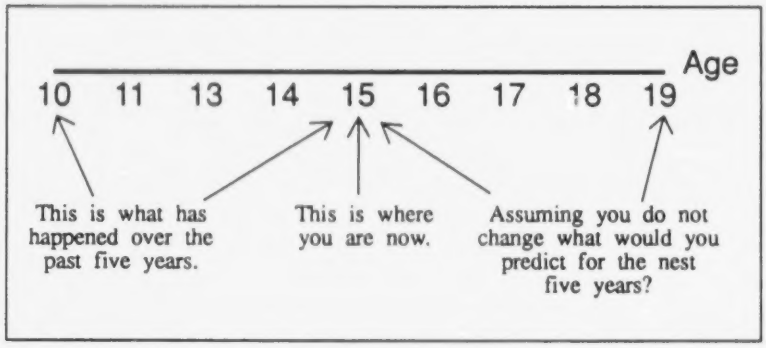
(b) Using a pile of newspapers, give the group the task of finding all the references to violence. Include the advertisements.

MESSAGE: IF YOU REALLY WANT TO CHANGE, ARE YOU STRONG ENOUGH TO HANDLE THE DOUBLE MESSAGES?

COLLAPSING TIME

This session is useful done as a prelude to the repeat of the Why? session (see p14).

Draw on the board (say for a 15 year old in the group) a line like that shown in the diagram. Then looking at the last five years, plot the approximate position of major angry and/or violent episodes. Most angry students should be able to plot a fair number!! For angry but non-physically violent students plotting the times they got to level 6 or above on thre Anger Chart is a possible alternative. Also plot other significant events — losses, shifting home etc.



The last five years will tell you what you have got in your computer programme. Given that you are getting older, bigger and stronger and assuming no change to your programme, what is possible in the future five years?

Will your current way of dealing with situations continue to work long term?

What will be the effect on your friends?

How will you handle relationships with the opposite sex?

Was your family a good one? Did it work?

If you choose to change, can you handle not being top dog?

Do you see involvement with the police, courts or prison in your future?

This exercise can then be extended to the next ten or fifteen years and the issue of how you want to get on with your partner/children can be seen.

Do you want to be able to handle your marriage in a different way to the way your father or mother handled his/hers?

Do you want to get on with your children in a different way to the way you get on with your father, your mother (or stepfather or stepmother)?

If the answer to any of these questions is "yes", then what do you have to change?

The record kept from the session "Why" earlier in the programme can now be put back up on the board and amended or added to by group members.

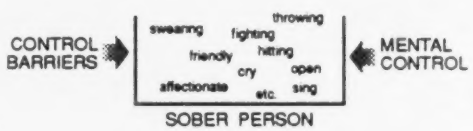
For a group of six or eight it is impossible to do this in one hour. It has to be split up into two sessions and/or part done for homework.

I have found that having each group member draw their decade and plot significant incidents is a useful first half, doing on the board an example of someone in the group. He/she can then copy it on to paper for use in the second session.

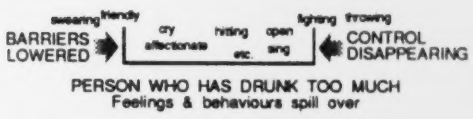
Alcohol

Many angry teenagers have personal experience of alcohol, and many come from homes where alcohol is a problem. Alcohol does not cause violence, but it does lower the barriers.

Brainstorm on the words to describe anger, violence, friendship etc. I then draw lines around the words and label the sides of the box "mental control" or "control barriers".



Alcohol lowers the barriers.



Alcohol lets us express feelings we normally control, e.g., you might put your arm on your mate's shoulder after drinking but not when sober. The same applies to singing, crying, talking about feelings, etc.

This is often personally familiar to teenagers. The danger for angry people is that alcohol removes your controls—it puts your brain to sleep and acts like an anaesthetic. THE FIRST THING TO GO IS THE ABILITY TO ACT RATIONALLY AND THINK CLEARLY. Loss of muscle control comes next.

ALCOHOL ALLOWS YOU TO SWITCH BACK TO THE OLD PROGRAMME.

Alcohol and some drugs, e.g. Valium, are disinhibitors. To identify a possible problem do this quiz with the group:

1. Do I drink or take drugs every day?
2. Am I drinking/drugging more than I used to?
3. Do or did any members of my family drink or drug excessively?
4. Do I drink/drug to change uncomfortable feelings?
5. When I start drinking/drug-taking can I stop?
6. Have I had any Court charges related to drinking/drug-taking?
7. Has drink/drug-taking caused problems in my relationships with parents, partners, children or friends?
8. Has drinking/drug-taking affected my work?

Anyone who answered "yes" to any of these questions, could have a problem.

CHAPTER 5
Towards Autonomy

SELF MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

(All five sections are important.)

1 FORWARD PROGRAMMING TO FACE THE DAY WHATEVER IT MIGHT BRING

This should be practised while performing some daily routine task such as teeth cleaning so that it becomes associated with it and becomes a habit. The student should consciously think such thoughts as...

- It's a pity that sometime today, I am likely to be the other end of someone else having a problem. I will remember that it is their problem and not mine.
- I will remember my OK line to keep things in proportion. It is stupid to choose to be angry.
- Whatever difficult things come up today, they can only be between OK and Dreadful. I can handle that.
- If difficult things happen today, I can use them to practise my OK line so that I can get good at it.

Note that this is NOT straight out brainwashing. It is a reminder that they've got a skill which will become more finely tuned if they use it - and problems become a challenge instead of a pain.

2 FORWARD PROGRAMMING TO FACE A SITUATION WHICH THEY KNOW IS GOING TO BE TOUGH

- This guy is pretty defensive. If he gets abusive, then that's his problem. It won't be pleasant, but it won't last long and I can handle being on the other end of his problem for a short while.
- I must remember to use my OK line - it will be important.
- I can only stick to the issues and not get sucked into an argument if I keep my cool.
- I can keep my cool if I refuse to allow myself to awfulise.
- Before I start, I will take a deep breath, hold it, breathe out slowly and relax.

There's nothing new in this idea - it's commonly called "getting psyched up". The difference is that you are reinforcing an actual strategy which you are going to be using.

3 BEING IN THE SITUATION

- This is not pleasant, but it's not the end of the world.
- There's a time limit on this situation. It isn't going to last for ever. I can handle that.
- What a pity! He's in a shitty! His problem, not mine!
- I can walk away from this if I have to. I'm strong enough to do that.
- Where on my anger scale am I?
- I will not hand you over my power. I am in charge of me!

What the student **should** be doing in a conflict situation of course, is to **listen** to the other person and it isn't easy to do that if you are repeating the above things like a parrot in your head. The better you do the forward programming, the less you need to do this. However, it is useful to have a few reinforcing statements to hang onto if you need them.

4 COPING WITH THE SITUATION IF YOU START TO "LOSE IT"

- I can feel the body signals - better take some time out.
- Feels like I ought to walk away from this.
- I'm feeling angry. What am I doing to myself? What am I telling myself?

This pre-supposes that the student has become self aware enough to tune into these feelings. Every opportunity is to be regarded as practice. If they "lose it" then that is part of the learning process and it is not to be regarded as failure.

If they do remove themselves from the situation, they can use their favourite method of calming down, such as

counting backwards
thinking a favourite thought
humming a favourite tune

imagining a favourite place
going for a walk
thinking themselves straight

To some extent, it depends on the problem and how soon they must return to it. There are dangers in training people to a set routine, because problems don't happen that way. What the students need is a set of skills and the ability to use them with flexibility and appropriateness.

5 SELF EVALUATION TO BE DONE AT NIGHT WHILE PERFORMING ANOTHER ROUTINE TASK.

- How did I do today?
- When did I forget to use my new programming?
- What happened when I forgot? Yeah! I got angry.
- And what happened then? Nothing good.
- What happened when I remembered? I kept my cool.
- What happened then? Things worked out a lot better.
- I'll do better tomorrow. I did better than yesterday!
- When I get really good at this, I needn't depend on other people for the way I feel ever again!

Naturally enough, they have to tell themselves the truth. The above are only specimen evaluations.

It is really important to build this evaluation in as an integral part of the Self Management Programme. It allows them to tune in to themselves in a very constructive way and it becomes a self rewarding task. It is also very important that they realise that there are going to be times when they take a slide. Even the most practised people do that. The critical thing is to learn from it every time it happens.

The skill of self evaluation is a very useful one to generalise. When you become your own most rigorous critic, it is much easier to accept evaluation from others - which is another thing they are going to have to live with.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION — how to convert an argument into a discussion

Human Beings communicate verbally with others on two basic levels - the rational, logical level (the head level), and the emotional or feeling level (the heart level).

(For counsellors who are familiar with Transactional Analysis this session can be re-named "Strengthening my Adult" or "How to put my Child under control". The content of this session can easily be re-phrased in transactional analysis terms).

When two people are operating at the head level, it is possible for them to discuss a conflict situation. They are able to attack the problem instead of attacking each other.

When two people are operating at the heart level, no such discussion is possible, if they are in a conflict situation. Neither one is able to listen to the other. They attack each other instead of the problem, which is not resolved, and relationships suffer damage.

The aim of this whole programme is to increase the strength and frequency of the rational (head level) responses and, in this way, to increase personal power.

In terms of the OK line, the aim is to reprogramme your thinking so that you reduce your tendency to awfulise. When an anger producing situation arises, you will be able to handle the situation just so long as you are in control of your thoughts instead of your emotions having control over you. The more effort you have put into reprogramming yourself, the better you will be able to manage your feelings, so that, eventually, it becomes entirely possible for you to manage a conflict situation where the other person is operating at the heart level and is behaving in an abusive fashion. You will be able to do this because you will be able to use the two primary communication skills of listening and using good assertive speech patterns. Because you have not upset yourself by awfulising, you will still feel OK and will be able to consistently attack the problem in such a way that the other person does not feel threatened and attacked. If you listen to an angry person for long enough without interrupting them, they eventually run out of steam. It is entirely possible to achieve a good outcome even though the other person is furiously angry at the beginning.

There is not room in this book to write about communication skills training, which becomes necessary at this point. There are many resources already in existence on the topic, easily available to the as-

siduous searcher, so I will limit myself to commenting about the results of the training.

It comes as a great surprise to many students to realise just what poor listeners most of us are. This raises awareness to the fact that we should

- never accept that any information passed by word of mouth is accurate.
- never imagine that we ourselves have picked up aural information accurately, and to be aware of that when repeating what we have heard.
- never get sucked into quarrels over what other people are said to have said. The potential for distortion is enormous. In a programme about anger management, it is entirely appropriate to raise awareness to this major cause of conflict.

When doing work on assertive speech patterns, it also comes as a surprise to students to discover just how strongly words such as the accusing "you" of the "You sentence", exaggerations such as "always, never, everybody, nobody", and judgemental words such as "should/n't, ought/n't", are built into our speech patterns. It is extremely difficult to reconstruct what one wants to say without using them. One useful exercise is to ask the students to just sit and listen in the school grounds to the interactions going on round about them and to observe just how frequently these words appear - and then to observe the results of their use. They will also be able to hear a great deal of 'awfulising' and to observe the results of that. Sitting back quietly and observing other people is a great way to convince oneself that investing some time and energy in changing one's own speech patterns is a good idea!

Some very telling points come out of the role play practice during assertive speech training.

- Assertive speech patterns do not come naturally. It takes a lot of practice.
- Assertive speech patterns come out "phony" unless the body language matches its verbal message. The beauty about using the OK line is that this problem disappears and you find yourself saying things like "I don't like what is happening here and I'd like to suggest a few changes", and your body language is automatically congruent.

The intent of this section is to give the student plenty of practice in learning the important skills of listening and assertive speech patterns and to get the important message that . . .

MESSAGE: YOUR SKILLS WILL BE OF LITTLE USE TO YOU NO MATTER HOW PRACTISED YOU HAVE BECOME IF YOU ALLOW YOURSELF TO BECOME ANGRY.

During training in Conflict Resolution, students can discover the following home truths.

- Our response to anger inducing situations depends on what we've got in our mental computer.
- We can make ourselves angry/violent.
- We can also make ourselves non-angry/ non-violent.
- Angry people feel powerless.
- Personal power is lost when "you" statements are used.
- Personal power can be retained when "I" statements are used.
- "I" statements mean it is easier to tell ourselves the truth.
- Bullies are actually people who have such a low self esteem that they need a support group while they try to "prove" to themselves that they are "tough".
- Understanding and forgiveness increase personal power.

MY SUPPORT NETWORK

This idea may be totally foreign to many teenagers, and so a group of examples may need to be given.

Your support network could include:

People whom you could or would, like to be able to help you with your homework.

People whom you might like to have with you when you hear some bad news.

People to whom you could talk about an incident where you remained in control of your anger.

People who accept you for what you are.

People you might ask for advice.

People you look up to.

People who like you

and so on.....

Then brainstorm on the board all the things the word "support" means.

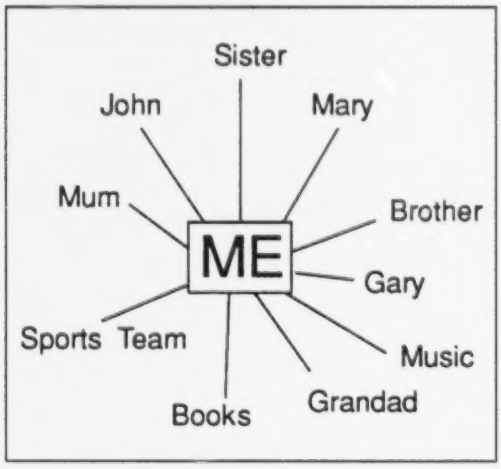
Have each group member, on a piece of paper, map their own support systems with themselves in the middle. The counsellor could map his or hers on the board as in the example on page 26.

It can be revealing to some students to realise they do have very few supports. By this point in the programme they are likely to see that, to make the changes in their thinking and behaviour which they

have identified for themselves, they may appreciate some support. This is especially relevant to teenagers because they feel the pressure of what they imagine others expect of them. The peer group can be the most important people in the lives of teenagers, influencing their values and standards, and therefore their behaviour.

Therefore, if a section of the peer group can be seen as supportive (the other members of the group), then changes are going to be somewhat easier.

It is useful to encourage the group to become part of each other's support network.



ASKING FOR SUPPORT

Prior to role play brainstorm on the board the sorts of questions the students may ask and identify the sorts of support they may want from each other.

It is common to find that boys (and men) are better at offering, or asking for practical help rather than emotional support.

This can be role played.

In adult anger management courses the issue of support is one of the final issues covered, but I prefer to do this two or so weeks before the end. This allows time for further role play in asking for support, and processing the need for, or the usefulness of, the trust which has developed amongst group members.

As part of my support of the group, I see them as a group every two or three weeks for about six months, or until the group agree that such meetings are unnecessary. These follow-up support meetings can be very satisfying experiences for all, as "successes" are shared. It is also a time to re-practise, using role play, situations which have been difficult.

FINAL ISSUES

PREDICTING RELAPSES

It is important to warn teenagers that there are going to be times when, with all the skills, best will and mental control, they are going to "blow it".

Relapses must be seen as part of the change process, and the odd incident does not give permission to give up. Such incidents become less frequent when they regularly carry out the evaluation process mentioned in p24.

COPING WITH FRIENDS

They are going to get pressures from all sorts of sources - friends, TV, movies, society in general, to go back to their old ways. So . . .

Will you be strong enough?

Have you enough support?

A further risk is that your new ways of staying in control, and refusing to give your power to those around, may confuse your so-called friends, and may even lose you some of them.

What do you think they will say?

How will you handle this?

(More opportunities for role play here.)

As your ideas develop you may become a threat to your friends who hold on to the old values.

- Can you stay with your new ideas when they try to put you down?
- Can you cope with being excluded from the group?
- How will you make new friends?

This is a very real problem, but if they use it as practice in using the OK line, they are able to acknowledge the need to make a break from the wrong sort of friends. The OK line in fact, allows you to grow up, to take responsibility for your own decisions. The peer group then loses its power over you.

A REMINDER

At this point, we would like to remind you that it is not our intention that our readers should follow this book to the letter. One of the hall-marks of a successful counsellor is to be able to assess a new set of resources and to use them appropriately. We give our readers credit for having the professional judgement not to use any section if they deem it to be inappropriate for their particular clients.

BLACK BOARD THEMES

Being fortunate enough to have a whiteboard in my room, I can leave a theme up for a week or so. This is particularly useful if I have two groups running at once. Once the programme has been under way for a couple of weeks, the whiteboard can be useful if a group member is late, if the theory part of that session is small or as a check to progress to date. Sometimes other students see the whiteboard and express an interest in knowing more about the programme.

1. Anger = an emotion
   Violence = a behaviour
2. Are you in CONTROL?
3. Are you strong enough to be different?
4. Who is in charge? (Of your feelings).
5. Anger is not violence.
   Anger can be healthy only if it is translated into action in such a way as to deal with the problem.
6. (Quote from Shakespeare) "Things are neither good nor bad but thinking makes them so". Hamlet.
7. (Quote from Epictetus 1st Cent. AD Stoic Roman philosopher)
   "People are not disturbed by events but by their view of events".
8. Are you strong enough to be non-violent?
9. People do have a choice.
10. How did you "win" this week?
11. Do you dare to be different?
12. Don't blow up — grow up.

IMAGERY

One of the themes of this programme has been the power of imagery and various images have been described in this programme. These include:

- Computer in your head
- Control comes from re-programming.
- Railroad and train — how to put on brakes.
- Feelings sausage machine — lack of mechanisms to express loneliness, friendliness, frustration, etc.

If students find any of these images useful, then go with them. However, some may come up with their own images of what it feels like to them when they become angry. In these cases the issue of mental control by thoughts over feelings can be followed through.

Images I have encountered include:

- boulder on my head that starts to move.
- lawnmower — especially noisy self-propelled type.
- washing machine — off-balance load on spin.
- red sports car with a sticking throttle.

One of the useful concepts about images is that it allows the teenagers to see their problems from the outside. Externalised difficulties are easier to manage than internalised ones.

RESTRAINT

Looking at issues in terms of restraint is generally much more useful than looking for cause and effect relationships. So during group discussions, e.g. of the anger journal, rather than ask questions such as:

Why did you hit him?

Why did that happen?

it is more useful to ask questions of restraint such as:

What stopped you walking away?

What prevented you asking for support?

Why did you ignore the STOP sign in your head?

What stopped you telling yourself the truth?

This style of questioning focuses on the blockages to change which can then be dealt with in various ways including role play.

QUESTIONS

The list of questions can be used in a variety of ways:

- Group discussion
- Starters for role play
- Increasing self-awareness
- Areas for practise in assertiveness training

1. Do you admit that you are angry when asked by someone else?
2. Do you have a tendency to take your anger out on someone other than the person you are angry with?
3. When you are angry with someone do you discuss it with that person?
4. Do you keep things in until you finally explode with anger?
5. Do you pout or sulk for a long time (a couple of days or so) when someone "hurts your feelings"?
6. Do you disagree with others even though you feel they might get angry?
7. Do you hit others when you get angry?
8. Does it upset you a great deal when someone disagrees with you?
9. Do you express your ideas when they differ from those of others?
10. Are you satisfied with the way in which you settle your differences with others?
11. Is it very difficult for you to say nice things to other people?
12. Do you become depressed very easily?
13. When a problem arises between you and another person, do you discuss it without losing control of your emotions?
14. Do you have a tendency to criticise or put down other people?
15. When someone has "hurt your feelings" do you discuss the matter with that person?
16. Do you have frequent arguments with others?
17. Do you often feel like hitting someone else?
18. Do you, at times, feel some anger towards someone you really like?
19. Do you have a strong urge to do something harmful?
20. Do you keep your cool (control) when you are angry with someone?
21. Do you tend to feel very bad or very guilty after getting angry at someone?
22. When you become angry, do you pull away or withdraw from people?
23. When someone is angry with you, do you automatically or quickly strike back with your own feelings of anger?
24. Are you aware of when you are angry?
25. Provided the timing is appropriate, do you express your feelings without exploding?
26. Do you tend to make cutting remarks to others?
27. Do you control yourself when things do not go your way?
28. How often do you say something like "It's not fair"?. (Normally statements like this are statements of anger/frustration)
29. Do you have a tendency to "awfulise" about things?
30. Do you have a tendency to get into "group griping" about things?
31. Do you have the kind of friends who automatically give you sympathy so that your anger is reinforced?

A FEELING WORD LIST

People sometimes find it difficult to think of words to explain feelings. To help you we have devised a list of "feeling words":

Words for reflecting "HAPPY FEELINGS"	**Words for "UPSET FEELINGS"**
accepted	accused
appreciated	angry
better	anxious
capable	bored
comfortable	defeated
confident	difficult
encouraged	disappointed
enjoy	discouraged
excited	doubt
glad	embarrassed
good	feeling like giving up
grateful	frightened
great	guilty
happy	hate/hated
loved	hopeless
pleased	hurt
proud	inadequate
relieved	incapable
respected	left out
satisfied	miserable
safe	put down
content	rejected
hopeful	sad
belonging	stupid
braveunfair	in control
unhappy	welcome
unloved	coping
want to get even	friendly
worried	managing
worthless	calm
curious	

MY ANGER CHART

	1. **Thoughts** *What I think*	2. **Body signs** *What my body is telling me*	3. **Behaviour changes** *What I say/* *What I do*
OK			

In column 1 put down the types of thoughts which students have — "I'll get him", "this isn't fair", "you bastard", etc.

In column 2 put the changes they become aware of as they become angry, e.g., tension in stomach, tightness in forehead, sweaty palms, clenched fists, tight across shoulders, etc.

In column 3 list the changes in the words they used and the volume used. Also list the changes in what students do, e.g., become quiet, move around faster than normal, stop looking at people, stare, punch, etc.

This is another use of the THINK — FEEL — DO concept.

ANGER JOURNAL

DATE			
INTENSITY LEVEL: 1 – 10			
SITUATION			
THOUGHTS			
PHYSICAL SIGNS IN ME			
BEHAVIOURAL SIGNS I Said... I did...			
DID YOU TAKE A TIME OUT	Yes ❒ No ❒	Yes ❒ No ❒	Yes ❒ No ❒
IF NOT, WHAT DID YOU DO?			

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(1) "Dealing With Anger" Jones & Banet, in 1976 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators.

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(4) Inventory of Anger Communication by Millard J. Bienvenu, Sr.

Copyright 1974 in the 1976 Annual Handbook for Group Facilitators Copyright 1976 University Associates Inc.

RESOURCES

(a) Using Roleplay, R. Lewis & J. Mee

Basic Skill Unit, Copyright 1982. Available from Careers, and Occupational Information Centre.
c/- Selwyn College, Grange Road,Cambridge CB3 9DQ
ENGLAND

Although referred to in "Guide to Careers Education Gold Book Themes" Department of Education 1986 P.29, this excellent book does not appear to be readily available in N.Z.

(b) An Assertiveness, Relating and Communication Skills Programme. Jeff Saunders, Pitcaithly House 1986. The Ministry of Education (Christchurch) may know of its availability.

IDEAS PEOPLE

My most grateful thanks:

Ken McMaster, Selwyn Centre, Christchurch

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Tony Daly, Social Work Director, North Canterbury Hospital Board.

Enid Hardie, Susan Beslay and Jennie Bridges for Anger Management Pictures.

How could you have behaved differently?

What other choices did you have?

Were you in control?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

How could you have behaved differently?

What other choices did you have?

Were you in control?

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Once your train gets started it's hard to stop

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Time out will prevent violence

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Power can be kept by using *"I"* statements.

52

Power can be lost by using *"you"* statements.

53

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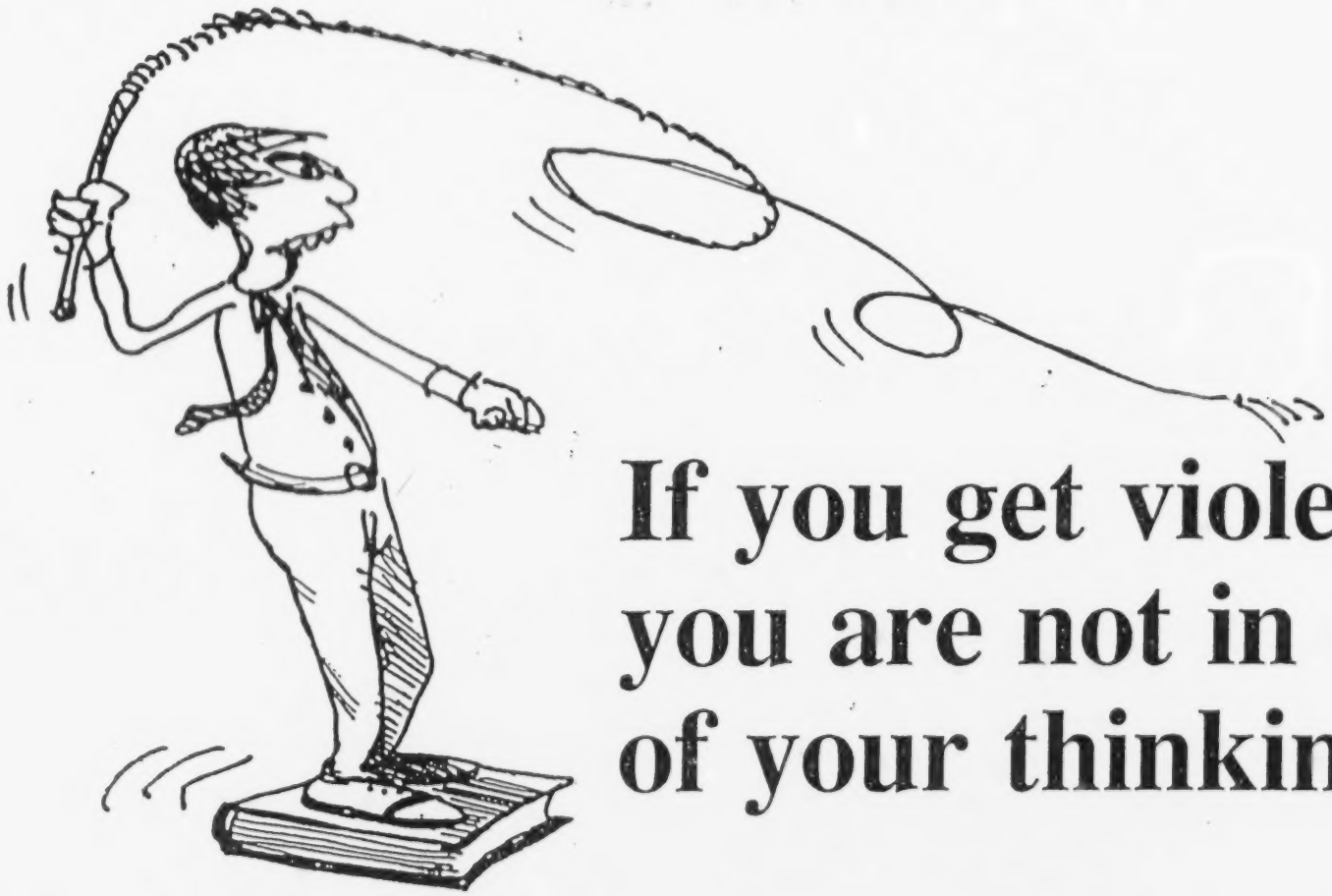
When I use an *"I"* statement I am in control

BEST COPY AVAILABLE



If you get violent, you are not in control of your thinking

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- thinking good thoughts
- self talk
- relaxing
- time out
- deep breathing

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Other people don't get you mad . . .

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

You get yourself mad . . .